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Press release | 31.01.2013

Dangerous pesticides

Bees urgently need to be protected from pesticides

Commenting on the European Commission's proposals to suspend three neonicotinoid insecticides (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin) Greens/EFA MEP **Bart Staes** stated:

"We applaud the regulatory action proposed by the European Commission's Directorate General for Health & Consumers as a first and fast response to the three reports, published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on 16th January 2013, on the toxicity risk to bees of the neonicotinoid insecticides.

"EFSA's report was followed by a report on 23 January from the European Environment Agency on the precautionary principle[1], in which imidacloprid is said to "particularly fit to the precautionary principle". The report explains the failures of the European and national risk assessment and monitoring systems that have permitted neonicotinoids to harm bees for a long period.

"Europe's politicians should prioritise saving the bees rather than listening to the short-term interests of the pesticide industry. A complete ban of all neonicotinoids is the least we can do to stop the collapse of our bee colonies."

The Greens urge the member states to face up to their responsibilities and listen to their citizens, beekeepers and environmental organisations. A recent petition of Avaaz gathered, in under two weeks, over 2.2 million signatures calling for "an immediate ban" on these pesticides.

In addition to this, nearly 90 MEPs from the Greens/EFA, EPP, S&D, ALDE, GUE and ECR groups addressed a letter[2] to Commissioner Borg calling on him to fully apply the precautionary principle and totally ban the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in the European Union and to ensure that none of the bee species is any longer affected by the use of imidacloprid, thiamethoxam or clothianidin.

[1] Please see here for the full explanation of the precautionary principle: http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2 (See part B Section 16)

[2] Please see here for the full letter to Commissioner Borg: http://www.greens-efa.eu/total-ban-on-the-use-of-neonicotnoids-insecticides-needed-9097.html

Find all information on the Greens/EFA campaign "Give bees a chance!" at: http://www.greens-efa.eu/give-bees-a-chance-9012.html

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Bart Staes

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